MARVEL® COMICS

X-MEN

SEP '96 4

# THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF CYCLOPS™ AND PHOENIX

## SINISTER TRIUMPH

## THE TIME-SPANNING CONCLUSION!

J. LEON

S.C. MARTINBROUGH

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

London, 1859...

APOCALYPSE – an ancient evil that has existed since the dawn of civilization and who now stands on the brink of igniting *global upheaval*...

NATHANIEL ESSEX – an obsessed scientist twisted by personal tragedy who has embraced an unspeakable destiny, becoming Apocalypse's disciple – *and reborn as Mr. Sinister!*

CYCLOPS and PHOENIX – members of the *Uncanny X-Men*, mutants from the late twentieth century who find themselves trapped in the past and alone against the combined might of mankind's two deadliest enemies!

As the world stands on the brink of a cataclysm that will obliterate civilization as we know it, fate has drawn these four extraordinary beings together – *and the outcome of their epic clash will forever alter the course of human history!*

DIRECT EDITION

00411

7 59606 04341 5

$1.95 US/$2.75 CAN

Stan Lee Presents:

# BEGINNINGS

1859

THIS IS WHERE IT HAPPENS.

THIS IS WHERE EVIL IS BORN...

...THE CRUX POINT UPON WHICH HUMANITY'S FUTURE TURNS.

FOR THE ANCIENT CONQUEROR KNOWN AS APOCALYPSE HAS ARISEN TO STAKE BLOODY CLAIM TO THE MODERN WORLD...

...AND HE HAS CLAIMED AN ALLY WHOSE SCIENTIFIC GENIUS WILL, IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME, PROVE TO BE THE DECIDING FACTOR IN SHAPING THE WORLD.

THEY ARE PERHAPS THE WORST VILLAINS MANKIND WILL EVER KNOW.

NOW, IN A WEIRD CHAMBER DRIPPING WITH ALIEN TECHNOLOGY...

...BENEATH THE STREETS OF MID-VICTORIAN LONDON...

...THE MAN WHOM APOCALYPSE HAS TEMPTED WITH DARK PROMISES CRIES OUT AS THE LAST DREGS OF HIS HUMANITY ARE SCORCHED FROM HIS SOUL, TURNING HIM INTO...

**THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF CYCLOPS™ AND PHOENIX™ Vol. 1, No. 4, September, 1996.** Published by MARVEL COMICS. Gerard Calabrese, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Copyright © 1996 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. Price $1.95 per copy in the U.S. and $2.75 in Canada. GST #R127032852. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition.CYCLOPS and PHOENIX (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) are trademarks of MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. No part of this book may be printed or reproduced in any manner without the written permission of the publisher. Printed in Canada.

SINISTER!

SCOTT, NO! YOU CAN'T KILL A MAN FOR WHAT HE *MIGHT* BECOME!

THEY ARE THE HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM OF JEAN GREY AND SCOTT SUMMERS -- THE MUTANTS KNOWN IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AS PHOENIX AND CYCLOPS.

AS MEMBERS OF THE OUTLAW X-MEN, THEY HAVE TRAVELED TO THE STARS...

...SEEN THE FAR-FLUNG FUTURE...

...AND NOW, INCREDIBLY, ARE IN THE PAST!

BUT HE'S NOT *NATHANIEL ESSEX* ANYMORE -- HE'S BECOME *MISTER SINISTER!*

IF WE DON'T SOMEHOW STOP HIM, HE'LL SPEND THE NEXT CENTURY *MANIPULATING* BLOODLINES...

*... GENETICALLY ENGINEERING* HIS OWN TWISTED VISION OF EVOLUTION!

*BUT AT THE LAST NANOSECOND...*

*... THE DESTRUCTIVE OPTIC BLASTS THAT SHOOT FROM THE EYES OF CYCLOPS CHANGE COURSE.*

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WORSE, JEAN --

-- THE FACT THAT I ALMOST *SLAUGHTERED* A MAN --

-- OR THE FACT THAT I *COULDN'T* DO IT!

I KNOW WHAT HE'S DESTINED TO DO TO YOUR *FAMILY*, SCOTT -- BUT YOU *KNOW* THAT'S NOT THE ANSWER.

BUT WHEN *SANCTITY* PULLED US INTO THIS ERA, SHE TOLD US THAT WE HAD TO SAVE THIS PRESENT... OR THE FUTURE WILL BE *DOOMED.*

*SUDDENLY, EVEN AS THE TIME-LOST X-MEN PONDER THEIR NEXT MOVE, THE SEWER BEGINS TO COLLAPSE...*

*... AND SCOTT SUMMERS TURNS HIS EYEBEAMS -- AND HIS FRUSTRATION -- ONTO THE FALLING DEBRIS.*

GOOD LORD --!

SCOTT -- *LOOK!*

SURELY THAT MEANS WE HAVE TO STOP THE *UNHOLY ALLIANCE* BETWEEN SINISTER AND APOCALYPSE...

... DOESN'T IT?

WE WERE SENT HERE TO PREVENT *APOCALYPSE* FROM TAKING OVER THE WORLD -- WE CAN'T CONCERN OURSELVES WITH *MAYBES.*

IF HE WINS, THERE *IS* NO TOMORROW. NO YOU... NO ME... NO *US.*

I DO BELIEVE I HAVE UNDERGONE WHAT AMOUNTS TO AN *INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION* OF THE MIND.

BLESSED *ICE* FLOWS IN MY VEINS! THE FIERCE LIGHT OF *CLARITY* BURNS IN MY EYES!

*NATHANIEL ESSEX*, WHOSE MORAL BAGGAGE PREVENTED ME FROM REACHING THE HIGHEST SUMMIT OF KNOWLEDGE, IS *NO MORE.*

I NOW TAKE MY FIRST STEP AS...

MISTER SINISTER!

I SHOULD HAVE KILLED HIM, JEAN. TO BLAZES WITH RIGHT AND WRONG!

THAT WOULD HAVE MADE YOU AS EVIL AS *HE IS*. YOU WOULD HAVE TRADED YOUR *SOUL* TO GET WHAT YOU WANTED!

MAYBE THAT'S A PRICE I *SHOULD* HAVE BEEN WILLING TO PAY, FOR THE SAKE OF ALL THE LIVES THAT SINISTER WILL *DESTROY.*

YOU, SIR, *INTRIGUE* ME.

YOU WANTED ME *DEAD.* FOR SOME REASON MY LIVING SEEMS TO AFFECT YOU IN A MOST NEGATIVE MANNER.

IF THAT IS THE CASE, OF COURSE YOU SHOULD HAVE KILLED ME!

PERHAPS YOU ARE TAINTED BY THE SAME SENTIMENTAL *POISON* THAT AFFLICTED THE MAN CALLED *ESSEX.*

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S *TAINTED*, SINISTER! YOU WILLINGLY ALLOWED WHATEVER *HUMANITY* YOU HAD TO BE *CARVED OUT* OF YOU...

...ALL FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR PRECIOUS *SCIENCE.*

THAT'S *INSANE!*

NO... THAT'S *PROGRESS.*

SHRAK

STUDY THIS!

CRAK

SUCH INCREDIBLE *POWER!* I WOULD... DISCOVER ITS SOURCE..!

MAYBE WE COULDN'T PREVENT YOUR *TRANSFORMATION...*

... BUT YOU'RE NEITHER *DEFENSELESS* NOR *HUMAN...*

... AND I'M NOT PULLING MY PUNCHES!

YOU MIGHT *HAVE* TO, SCOTT. THIS WHOLE PLACE IS *MOVING* -- THE SEWER IS COMING DOWN AROUND US!

GOTTA TAKE THE CHANCE... TO FINISH HIM OFF!

IF I CAN STOP HIM *NOW*... IT'LL CHANGE *EVERYTHING.*

SCOTT, YOU DON'T *KNOW* THAT!

I'LL *TELEKINETICALLY* KEEP AS MUCH DEBRIS FROM FALLING AS I CAN... BUT I CAN'T HOLD IT *FOREVER!*

C'MON, BOYS. IF I'M GONNA BE BURIED ALIVE, I'D RATHER IT WEREN'T IN A STINKIN' SEWER!

*MEANWHILE, CYCLOPS PREPARES TO UNLEASH A FINAL, DEVASTATING ASSAULT...*

FORGIVE ME... I AM, AS IT WERE, *NEWLY BORN...* AND SO UNABLE TO *RESIST* YOUR POWER AS I MIGHT.

BUT WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME HAVE I EVER DONE TO *YOU...* FOR YOUR HATRED OF ME TO BE SO... *PALPABLE?*

WHAT *HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE* DO YOU POSSESS?

WE ARE ALIKE, BOTH HARBINGERS OF THE *GREAT MUTATION* THAT I HAVE PREDICTED.

WHY, WE SHOULD BE *ALLIES!*

INSTEAD, YOU FOOLISHLY CHOOSE TO OPPOSE A BEING WHO OFFERS *KNOWLEDGE UNTOLD*...

...GATHERED OVER A LIFETIME THAT SPANS *THOUSANDS* OF YEARS.

WHAM

*AND BEFORE SCOTT SUMMERS CAN ACT...*

*...APOCALYPSE'S STRONGHOLD METAMORPHOSES...*

*...WRAPPING FINGERS OF ORGANIC METAL AROUND SINISTER.*

AH, IT SEEMS THAT *TECHNOLOGY* TRIUMPHS OVER YOUR BRUTE *OCULAR STRENGTH.*

CAN'T *GET* TO HIM!

OUR MEETING HAS BEEN AMUSING — *PAINFULLY* SO — BUT IS NOW *ABORTED.*

I'VE *WORK* TO DO. I SHALL *DECODE* THE NATURE OF EXISTENCE... I'LL *CUT* THE GORDIAN KNOT OF EVOLUTION --

-- BUT *FIRST*... I SHALL FINISH OFF APOCALYPSE'S NASTY LITTLE *PLAGUE.*

SINISTER! HE'S JUST *USING* YOU!

IF LETTING HIM *BELIEVE* THAT ALLOWS *ME* ACCESS TO THE TOOLS OF SCIENCE, SO *BE* IT.

HE WON'T LET YOU USE THOSE TOOLS FOR ANYTHING BUT *CONQUEST* AND *WAR!*

HE'S NOT INTERESTED IN KNOWLEDGE -- HE'S A *TYRANT!* HE LIVES ONLY FOR...

*...DESTRUCTION!*

*SCOTT!* COME *ON!*

WE LET HIM GET AWAY, JEAN! WE LET THE MONSTER GET AWAY!

THE REST WILL BE *HISTORY..!*

WE'RE *ALL* HISTORY IF WE DON'T FIND APOCALYPSE!

BUT FIRST...

...WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE ALL THE *OTHERS* HAVE MADE IT OUT OF THE SEWER!

EVEN DEEPER BENEATH THE TEEMING STREETS OF LONDON...

...APOCALYPSE'S ALIEN STRONGHOLD HAS FINALLY COME TO A HALT...

...AND THE MAN WHO HAS DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO EXPERIMENTATION AT LAST FINDS THE *PERFECT SUBJECT*...

*...HIMSELF!*

APOCALYPSE'S CHEMICAL PESTILENCE CAN WAIT. FIRST... I MUST PUT MY NEWFOUND SELF TO THE *TEST.*

LET US SEE JUST HOW *EXTENSIVE* THE EGYPTIAN'S TRANSFIGURATION OF ME IS.

A LITTLE *MUSIC BOX,* WHICH I BOUGHT FOR *REBECCA.*

BEFORE THE DEATH OF OUR FIRST SON, *ADAM*...

...BEFORE I REALIZED A DESTINY FAR, FAR GREATHER THAN MY OWN *PATHETIC* NEEDS.

DING DONG

AH, YES. HER PHOTO-GRAPH.

MY WIFE... WAS A HANDSOME WOMAN.

EYES, DARK. JAW, DELICATE. CHEEKBONES, LOFTY. SKIN, RATHER LIKE MILK.

LIPS, ALMOST BRUISED WITH VIOLET HUE.

DING DONG

DONG

DEAR GOD..!

IT'S *TRUE*...

...I FEEL NO PAIN! NOT THE SLIGHTEST JAB OF *REMORSE*...

...OR *LOVE*.

MERELY A VAGUE MEMORY OF A *SMELL*... THE *CRUSHED DRIED FLOWERS* THAT REBECCA LIKED SO WELL.

YET EVEN THIS BRINGS NO PAIN.

TRULY, I AM *FREE!*

FREE AT LAST TO PURSUE MY SCIENTIFIC WORK WITHOUT THE MORAL RESTRAINTS OF *ESSEX* —

— UNHURRIED BY THE THREAT OF *MORTALITY*.

I AM FREE!

AND YET...

AND YET... NOT *ENTIRELY* SO.

I OWE MY FREEDOM TO *APOCALYPSE*... AND AS THAT *STRANGER* WITH THE *PULSING EYES* SUGGESTED, THAT, TOO, IS A KIND OF PRISON.

I *MUST* COMPLETE THE TIMELESS ONE'S PLAGUE

IN TRUTH, I AM NOT... ENTIRELY *SANGUINE* ABOUT THE POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF SUCH AN UNSCIENTIFIC ASSAULT ON THE WORLD'S POPULATION...

... BUT WHO AM I TO DENY THE WILL OF ONE SO *ANCIENT* AND *POWERFUL*?

AND BESIDES... ALL THOSE WHO *MOCKED* ME... ALL THOSE WHO CALLED ME *MAD*...

... WOULD IT BE *SO* TERRIBLE TO WATCH THEM CHOKING ON THEIR OWN STUPIDITY?

MEANWHILE...

FWAM

ACE!

UNFORTUNATELY, THE BEARSKIN BUSBIES OF THE QUEEN'S HOUSEHOLD GUARDS WERE NEVER INTENDED TO WITHSTAND THIS KIND OF TREATMENT...

THE ELEGANT CORRIDOR OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE IS QUIET BUT FOR THE GENTLE CRACKLING OF FRIED SKIN...

...AS APOCALYPSE, A MUTANT WHO HAS WALKED THE EARTH SINCE THE TIME OF ANCIENT EGYPT, MAKES HIS WAY TOWARD...

...THE GREAT BANQUETING HALL.

THE DUCK WAS EXCELLENT AND THE PHEASANT DIVINE, BUT I AM AFRAID THE GUINEA FOWL WAS A LITTLE...

FOUL, AMBASSADOR?

HAH HAH! VERY GOOD, MA'AM. VERY GOOD.

HOW... HEARTENING. THESE ARE THE RULERS OF PERHAPS THE GREATEST EMPIRE ON EARTH... THESE FAT, WINE-SWILLING OAFS.

HOW LITTLE THEY KNOW OF TRUE STRENGTH...

...AND HOW CRUELLY I SHALL FIRST EXPOSE... AND THEN SLIT OPEN... THEIR FLACCID UNDERBELLY.

FOR THIS IS THE ERA I HAVE AWAITED DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES...

...THE TIME WHEN A NEW RACE OF THE STRONG — OTHERS LIKE MYSELF — WILL RISE TO CULL THE WEAK FOM THE FIT.

SURELY IT WAS FATE THAT LED ME TO ESSEX — WHOSE THEORIES CONFIRMED MY OWN BELIEFS...

...JUST AS THE APPEARANCE OF THOSE TWO STRANGERS IS A PORTENT OF THINGS TO COME.

ENOUGH. LET ME THEN BEGIN THIS AGE...

...LET ME IGNITE THE FLAMES OF GLOBAL CONFLICT BY SNUFFING OUT THIS FALSE ROYALTY!

WHILE AT THE MOUTH OF A CRUMBLING SEWER...

...OSCAR STAMP AND THE BOY NAMED DANIEL EDGE TOWARDS MERCIFUL DAYLIGHT...

WHAT... ARE YOU GOING TO DO *NOW*, OSCAR?

DON'T RIGHTLY KNOW, DANNY. BUT I RECKON WE SHOULD STICK TOGETHER, LIKE. NEITHER OF US HAVE GOT ANY FAMILY OR NOTHING...

...AND IT CAN BE A ROUGH OLD WORLD ON YOUR *OWN*.

STICK TOGETHER? YES. I THINK THAT WOULD BE --

# KRASH

AIEE!

THE SEWER'S CAVING IN!

NO IT AIN'T! IT'S JUST YOUR OLD MUCKER, *COOTIE TREMBLE!*

SEE HOW THAT NICE APOCALYPSE BLOKE HAS GONE AND MADE ME EVEN TOUGHER AND MORE HANDSOME THAN EVER?

PUT ME IN ONE OF HIS *MACHINES* AND I CAME OUT ALL *DIFFERENT!*

*HELP!* GET HIM *OFF* ME!

WEREN'T FINKING OF LEAVING WITHOUT OLD COOTIE, WAS YOU?

OH... MY GOD! SOMETHING'S *HAPPENED* TO HIM!

HE'S TURNED... INTO A *MONSTER!*

I *AIN'T* NO MONSTER! THE GIRLS ALL *LOVE* ME!

ME HEAD *HURTS* AND ME SKIN'S FALLING OFF...

...I SMELL AND ME EYES FEEL LIKE ROTTEN OYSTERS...

BUT I *AIN'T* NO MONSTER!

SAY I AIN'T NO MONSTER!

Ugh... STRANGLING... CAN'T BREATHE!

OWW!

I'M... BLOODY FLYING!

NOT FLYING...

...BUT HURLED THROUGH THE AIR BY THE AWESOME MENTAL POWERS OF THE X-MAN KNOWN AS PHOENIX!

HE'S IN... SO MUCH *PAIN*... HIS PSYCHIC AURA... SCREAMING OUT IN AGONY AND CONFUSION...

APOCALYPSE'S *TRANSFORMATION* WAS TOO QUICK, TOO CARELESS.

NOW THE MUTATION THAT CAUSED COOTIE'S ENHANCEMENT IS SPIRALLING OUT OF CONTROL...

...AS THOUGH HIS ENTIRE BODY WERE A *CANCER CELL!*

I... FEEL... SICK...

HEL... HELP... PUH... LEASE...

CAN'T *SAVE* HIM... BEST I CAN DO IS...

...TRY TO ENTER HIS *MIND*... EASE HIS SUFFERING...

*AHH!* BRAIN CELLS *MUTATING*... BY THE SECOND...

NO... GOOD... CAN'T MAINTAIN CONTACT..!

*WRENCHING NOISE FROM*

BLOODY—! HIS NECK'S *BUSTING!*

ALL BY *ITSELF?!*

SHAME. ALL YOUR POTENTIAL... *SPOILED* BY WEAK-WILLED MENTALITIES.

BY YOUR SUPPOSED KINDNESS YOU CAUSE MORE SUFFERING THAN ANY TYRANT.

I BROKE COOTIE'S NECK... I *TERMINATED* HIM.

A MUCH SIMPLER AND MORE SCIENTIFICALLY ROBUST WAY OF EASING THE WRETCH'S SUFFERING.

IT SEEMS WE CANNOT ESCAPE EACH OTHER, STRANGER.

SINISTER! NOW WE *FINISH* WHAT WE STARTED.

SCOTT, RIGHT NOW, IT'S BEST WE COMMUNICATE *TELEPATHICALLY*. OUR PRIORITY IS TO STOP APOCALYPSE.

MAYBE SINISTER CAN HELP US.

SINISTER? HELP? SO TELEPATHS CAN LOSE THEIR MINDS TOO, HUH?

LOOK AT HIS BODY. THE TRANSMUTATION WAS SO CRUDE, SO HIDEOUSLY *UN*SCIENTIFIC.

IT'S WORTH A SHOT. MAYBE THERE'S STILL SOME VESTIGE OF HUMANITY LEFT IN HIM...

TH■ HASTILY-TRANSFORMED MARAUDERS ARE A *TRAVESTY* OF THE DREAM I HAVE FOR THE NEW SPECIES. THE CORRECT BLOODLINES MUST ■ *BRED NATURALLY* TO PRODUCE THE MOST RACIALLY SUPREME BEINGS.

*THIS* MUST NOT ■ ALLOWED TO HAPPEN AGAIN.

I CARE NOTHING FOR HIS SUFFERING PER SE, AND ONE MUST BE WILLING TO BE CRUEL IN THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH...

... BUT CRUELTY FOR NO PURPOSE IS *IGNORANCE* -- AND IGNORANCE IS THE GREATEST *ENEMY* OF SCIENCE.

DON'T YOU SEE? *THIS* IS THE WAY OF APOCALYPSE! CRUELTY ISN'T A MEANS TO HIM... IT'S AN *END!*

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH... LORD APOCALYPSE ■ NONE OF YOUR AFFAIR.

I BEG TO DIFFER! YOU'VE *GOT* TO TELL ME WHERE HE IS, WHAT HE PLANS TO *DO!*

WHY SHOULD I HELP YOU? WHEN I WAS ESSEX THE WORLD *MOCKED* ME! NOW IT BEGS FOR MY ASSISTANCE?!

WHAT PLEASING *IRONY!*

I DON'T CALL WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER IRONY, SINISTER. I CALL IT *EVIL.*

YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO STOP THAT EVIL.

THE WAY YOU CALL ME SINISTER... SO EASILY... AS THOUGH YOU HAVE OFTEN ADDRESSED ME THUS.

HOW I WOULD DEARLY LIKE TO PUT YOU UNDER THE MICRO-SCOPE.

YOUR REQUESTS, HOWEVER, ARE *FUTILE.* EVEN IF I TOLD YOU OF APOCALYPSE'S WHEREABOUTS, IT WOULD AVAIL YOU *NOTHING.*

HE IS ONE *BEYOND* YOUR KEN.

HIS PLAGUE WILL SPREAD QUICKLY ACROSS YOUR WORLD, KILLING *MILLIONS.*

ONLY THE MOST RESILIENT... LIKE *US*... WILL SURVIVE.

NATURE MUST DETERMINE ITS *OWN* COURSE

SINISTER!

THINK OF THE CHILDREN!

THE CHILDREN, NATHANIEL... NATURE AT ITS MOST *FRAGILE.*

YOU MIGHT WANT TO VISIT *BUCKINGHAM PALACE.*

BUCKINGHAM PALACE --

ALL BUT ONE OF THE GUESTS HAVE DEPARTED...

MISTER GLADSTONE, WE CONTINUE TO BE MOST CONCERNED BY THE *PROBLEM* WITH THE *IRISH*.

WITH RESPECT, MA'AM, FOR MANY FOLK LIVING IN THAT UNHAPPY LAND, IT IS WE *BRITISH* WHO ARE THE [redacted]

THE SOLUTION IS *SIMPLE*.

*RAZE* THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. *KILL* ALL ABLE-BODIED MEN *AND* MALE CHILDREN.

*END* OF PROBLEM.

I COMPLIMENT YOU ON THE GRAND SETTING OF YOUR *PALACE* -- BUT YOU HAVE GROWN *SOFT* AND *FAT*.

AN EMPIRE THAT FORGETS HOW EMPIRES ARE WON... IS DOOMED TO *CRUMBLE*.

HOW IN THE NAME OF JUPITER DID HE GET *IN* HERE?

*GUARDS!*

GUARDS!

YOUR GUARDS ARE USELESS.

YOUR PUNY *WEAPONS* AND FOOLISH *CEREMONIES* I CONSIGN TO HISTORY...

THUS...

KLK

AUGH!

KBOWM

MARK HOW *APOCALYPSE* DEALS WITH *PROBLEMS*.

1 AN [redacted] METAMORPHOSIS [redacted]

GOOD GRACIOUS! HE'S...

IT'S...

ALBERT, *DO* SOMETHING!

*WAS KANN ICH TUN? ER IST UNMENSCHLICH!*

EVEN AS I TRANSFORM INTO MY *TRUE SHAPE*...

... SO WILL I *TRANSFORM* YOUR WORLD INTO A GLORIOUS BATTLEFIELD OF *PERPETUAL CONFLICT*, WHERE ONLY THE *STRONG* WILL SURVIVE.

FZOOM

YOUR DEATHS SHALL HERALD THE END OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

THE END OF ALL EMPIRES.

AND THE BEGINNING OF THE *AGE OF APOCALYPSE!*

BUT INCREDIBLY, THE TELEPATHIC BLAST OF POWER IS DEFLECTED FROM ITS INTENDED TARGET BY AN UNSEEN FORCE...

...AND DEFLECTED BACK...

...WHENCE IT CAME!

NGUGHH!

MY *TELEPATHIC* [redacted] WORKED... BUT THE EFFORT OF DEFLECTING SO MUCH POWER HAS LEFT ME *WEAKENED*, SCOTT...

YOU TAKE CARE OF THE *V.I.P.S* —

— I'M GONNA NAIL APOCALYPSE WHILE HE'S *DOWN.*

YOU--?!

GE-GENTLEMEN, I DO NOT BELIEVE THIS [redacted] HAPPENING!

YOU'RE *PRIME MINISTER*, GLADSTONE, *YOU* DO SOME-THING!

WI-WITH RESPECT, MA'AM...

...I AIN'T BUDGING.

...TIS THEM HUM...

...APOCALYPSE REMAINS A FEARSOME OPPONENT.

'TIS A PITY WE HAVE TO *FIGHT*, STRANGER. YOU ARE STRONG. YOU DO NOT COWER LIKE *BABIES* BEHIND GENTEEL FURNITURE.

YOU ARE A *SIGN* OF *THINGS TO COME.*

YOU DON'T KNOW THE *HALF* OF IT...!

=NGUHHN= CRUSHING... ME...

BUT YOU FACE THE IRRESISTIBLE *MIGHT* OF ONE WHO HAS SURVIVED *WAR*, *FAMINE* AND THE PASSAGE OF *CENTURIES.*

AND SO... YOU MUST INEVITABLY *FALL...*

"... TO THE *WAYSIDE!*"

*OOOFFF!* JUST MANAGED TO ROLL WITH THE FALL --!

THOK

YOU ALSO, WOMAN...

... THOUGH COMMENDABLY STRONG...

... CANNOT WITHSTAND THE TIDE OF *DESTINY.*

*AAHH!*

AND NOW *YOU* THREE MUST FACE DEATH WITH *SHAME...*

... FOR BETTER CREATURES THAN YOU *FOUGHT* AND *FAILED* TO SAVE *YOUR* WORTHLESS HIDES.

AS I SPEAK, *DISEASE* BEYOND IMAGINING WILL BE POISONING YOUR PEOPLE..

... AND YOUR DEATHS WILL BE...

WILL... BE...

STRANGELY...

...BUT UNMISTAKABLY...

Uhh... WEAKENING...

WHAT'S... HAPPENING TO ME..?

...THE TRASHED BANQUET HALL IS SUFFUSED...

...WITH THE SCENT OF CRUSHED FLOWERS.

JEAN! YOU OKAY?

I AM. BUT *HE* ISN'T. I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT --

-- BUT THIS MIGHT BE THE LAST CHANCE WE *GET*.

HIT HIM!

IMMEDIATELY, REFLEXES FORGED IN THE HEAT OF HUNDREDS OF BATTLES TAKE OVER...

...AND THE TWO X-MEN PRESS THEIR ADVANTAGE...

...BOMBARDING THE AGELESS WARLORD WITH THE COMBINED *STRENGTH* OF THEIR MUTANT POWERS!

THIS CANNOT *BE*! THIS... IS THE AGE... OF APOCALYPSE!

I HAVE FORESEEN IT!

I... CANNOT... BE...

...DEFEATED!

SCOTT! DO YOU *FEEL* IT? I JUST EXPERIENCED A VAGUE *PSYCHIC TUG*... THE LIKES OF WHICH I'VE FELT ONLY ONCE BEFORE!

IN OTHER WORDS... WE'RE STARTING TO GET PULLED BACK TO OUR *OWN TIME.*

WE BETTER FINISH THIS *QUICKLY--!*

*BUT, SUDDENLY...*

*SINISTER!*

***ENOUGH!*** YOU ARE TOO WEAKENED TO FIGHT ME! IF YOU PERSIST...

...I SHALL HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO *DESTROY* YOU BOTH.

ESSEX? WHAT... HAPPENED?

THE PLAGUE, MY LORD.

THERE WERE SOME... *UNEXPECTED* DIFFICULTIES.

*HE'S LYING, SCOTT. I CAN FEEL IT. MAYBE WE GOT THROUGH TO HIM -- [redacted] WE SUCCEEDED!*

*AND MAYBE HE'S JUST GOT HIS [redacted] AGENDA.*

*EITHER WAY, HE'S RIGHT. WITH OUR BODIES BEGINNING TO TIMESHIFT, THERE'S NO WAY TO FIGHT HIM.*

*WE'LL HAVE TO LIVE WITH WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED...*

*[redacted]EFORE ANOTHER THOUGHT THE [redacted]-MEN...*

*[redacted]F NEGATIVE [redacted] LAWS OF PHYSICS.*

BACK TO THE STRONG-HOLD, SINISTER...

I... NEED... TO... REJUVENATE...

*FAREWELL, STRANGERS...*

*...I AM CERTAIN WE WILL MEET AGAIN.*

*[redacted]ND THE CREATURES [redacted] -- AN GREATEST*

...ARE GONE!

DID YOU SEE THE WAY SINISTER LOOKED AT ME? LIKE I WAS A *MOUSE* READY FOR *DISSECTION.*

I GUESS WE KNOW HOW HIS OBSESSION WITH *MY* BLOODLINE STARTED.

ALL THE *PAIN* THAT THE PEOPLE I LOVE WILL *SUFFER* THROUGH BECAUSE OF SINISTER...

...IT'LL HAPPEN BECAUSE *I* WAS *HERE.*

WE STOPPED APOCALYPSE FROM CREATING GLOBAL WAR, AND HELPED PERSUADE SINISTER NOT TO POISON THE WORLD WITH *DISEASE.*

AS FAILURES GO, THAT'S QUITE A SUCCESS.

WE HAVE TO ACCEPT THAT THIS IS HOW IT WAS *MEANT* TO BE.

BUT THERE'S STILL *ONE MORE* THING WE HAVE TO DO...

I SAY! YOU TWO! WHOEVER... *WHAT*EVER YOU ARE!

CAREFUL, MA'AM, THEY MAY BE DANGEROUS.

POPPYCOCK!

I WANT TO KNOW WHAT IS *HAPPENING!*

THAT ■ KNOWLEDGE THAT YOU MUST NOT HAVE...

HOW *DARE* YOU SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT! I AM *QUEEN* OF THE *UNITED KINGDOM!*

AND I AM A *CITIZEN* OF THE *UNITED STATES OF* ■

AND THIS IS A PSYCHIC BLANKET OF FORGETFULNESS...

...*CLEANSING* YOUR MIND OF ALL YOU HAVE JUST WITNESSED.

*IN THE NEXT INSTANT...*

...*THE MYSTERIOUS POWER THAT SENT SCOTT AND JEAN BACK THROUGH TIME IS REVERSED...*

...*LEAVING MYSTIFIED THE TRIO OF BRITISH ROYALTY!*

*GOOD LORD!* WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE HALL? LOOKS LIKE AN EXPLOSION! BUT I HEARD... AND SAW *NOTHING!*

NOR I, PRIME MINISTER.

TRULY... WE ARE NOT *UNAMAZED.*

SOON...

...IN THE ALIEN SANCTUARY DEEP BENEATH LONDON...

NEED ANOTHER... PERIOD OF *HIBERNATION*...

THE SIGNS... THE *PORTENTS*... WERE GOOD... BUT PERHAPS THE TIME... NOT QUITE... CORRECT.

YOU SAY... THERE WERE *PROBLEMS* WITH... THE GERM?

YES, MY LORD. OF A *BIOLOGICAL* NATURE.

WHEN I ATTEMPTED TO *ALTER* THE CHEMICAL STRUCTURE OF THE PLAGUE SO THAT ITS TOXICITY WOULD NOT BE DESTABILIZED BY THE CLIMATIC --

*SILENCE! IMPUDENT DOG!*

I *MADE* YOU! I SHAPED YOU FROM THE DULL CLAY OF NATHANIEL ESSEX... AND YOU TAKE ME FOR A FOOL!

N-NO, MY LORD...

I TOO WAS ONCE A SLAVE FULL OF BURNING RESENTMENT! I SEE THE SIGNS IN *OTHERS!*

NOW... LET YOUR LAST BREATH BE THE *TRUTH*, SINISTER!

VERY WELL... YOU ARE CORRECT. I DELIBERATELY MANIPULATED THE PLAGUE... SO IT WOULD AFFECT ONLY YOU.

BUT YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM QUICKLY ADAPTED TO IT... WHICH IS WHY... YOU STILL LIVE..

AS I THOUGHT.

I AM WEAKENED, SINISTER, BUT NOT SO WEAK THAT I CANNOT *CRUSH* YOU.

BUT FIRST... TELL ME *WHY*.

YOU HAVE LEFT *ESSEX* BEHIND... WHAT DO YOU CARE HOW MANY MILLIONS SUFFER... [redacted] FOR THE STRONG TO SURVIVE...

... OR FOR YOU TO REACH THE APEX OF LEARNING?

IT WAS NOT THAT, APOCALYPSE. THE TRANSMUTATED PLAGUE WAS SCIENTIFICALLY [redacted]*RBARIC*...

... IT WOULD HAVE *POLLUTED* AND *DEFORMED* THE EVOLUTION OF THE SPECIES!

ALL MY WORK, ALL MY PREDICTIONS OF THE [redacted] *MUTATION*... THE DISEASE WOULD HAVE MADE A *MOCKERY* OF IT.

*KILL* ME IF YOU MUST... BUT I WILL NOT BE PARTY TO THAT.

NO, SINISTER. I WILL NOT KILL YOU.

WHAT YOU DID -- TO DARE DEFY ME -- SHOWED *STRENGTH*. THAT IS *GOOD*.

BUT IT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AGAIN.

I HAVE LEARNED FROM YOU, GOOD ESSEX. ABOUT WHAT *I AM*...

... AND, [redacted] DOING SO, WHAT I [redacted] *BE*.

BUT NEVER FORGET IT IS *I* WHO POSSESS THE TRUE POWER, SINISTER.

IT IS I WHO DECIDE WHETHER YOU LIVE TO WITNESS YOUR *GREAT MUTATION*...

... OR DIE BEFORE IT COMES TO *FRUITION*.

THE SIGNS AND PORTENTS DO NOT LIE, SINISTER.

WHEN I RETURN, IT WILL BE THE DAWN OF THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE.

AND *YOU* WILL BE MY *FAITHFUL SERVANT*.

*THE MAN WHO WAS ONCE NATHANIEL ESSEX TURNS HIS FACE AS THE HEAT FROM THE TELEPORTING STRONGHOLD BURNS THROUGH SOLID ROCK.*

*AND FOR A MOMENT, HIS MIND IS AS SCORCHED, AS HELPLESS, AS THAT SAME SINGED RUBBLE.*

*FOR HE REALIZES THAT HE SERIOUSLY UNDER-ESTIMATED THE ANCIENT AND TERRIBLE WARLORD.*

*THAT COULD HAVE COST HIM HIS LIFE... AND WORSE, THE OPPORTUNITY TO INDULGE HIS EVERY SCIENTIFIC URGE.*

*HE REALIZES TOO, WITH SOMETHING APPROACHING FEAR...*

*... THAT THE DAY WILL COME WHEN HE WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER TO SERVE APOCALYPSE... ONCE AND FOR ALL...*

*... EVEN IF IT MEANS DESTROYING THE SPECIES' FUTURE!*

SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE OF TIME...

SANCTITY -- DISCIPLE OF THE TIME-SPANNING ASKANI SISTERHOOD -- IMPRESSES HER WILL UPON THE AMORPHOUS NON-SPACE...

...AND APPEARS BEFORE TWO VERY ANXIOUS X-MEN!

ONCE MORE, YOU HAVE PROVED YOURSELVES WORTHY OF BLESSING AND *REVERENCE.*

CONSIDER IF YOU WILL THE *ROLE* NATHANIEL ESSEX PLAYS IN THE GRAND SCHEME OF HUMAN HISTORY...

...NOT JUST IN *YOUR* LIFE, BUT THE LIVES OF *ALL.*

IT IS *MISTER SINISTER* -- FOR HIS OWN TWISTED REASONS, BUT HE NONETHELESS -- WHO *ORCHESTRATES* THE BIRTH OF YOUR SON, SCOTT SUMMERS.

YOUR *SON,* AND THE FUTURE'S *SAVIOR...*

...NATHAN DAYSPRING SUMMERS -- THE MAN ALSO CALLED *CABLE.*

THE MEN OF THE *HELLFIRE CLUB* WILL BE DISAPPOINTED, AS THEIR AWAITED SIGNAL WILL *NOT* NOW COME...

...THEIR DARK MESSIAH DISPATCHED ONCE MORE INTO DORMANCY.

BUT WE STILL DIDN'T DO ALL WE *COULD* HAVE!

HOW SO, FATHER OF DAYSPRING?

SCOTT IS UPSET WE LET SINISTER SLIP THROUGH OUR FINGERS.

I SUGGESTED TO YOU THAT IF YOU DID NOT SAVE THE PRESENT, THEN THE FUTURE IS DAMNED.

BUT ONE MAN'S PRESENT... IS ANOTHER'S *PAST.*

YOU MEAN ... OUR PRESENCE WAS MEANT TO *PERSUADE* ESSEX TO BECOME SINISTER? HE *HAS* TO EXIST IN ORDER FOR CABLE TO EXIST?

TIME IS NOT A THING SO EASILY QUANTIFIED, KINSMAN.

WE ARE ALL OF US TOO *SMALL* AND TOO EMBROILED IN THE STUFF OF THATNESS TO BE ABLE TO STAND OUTSIDE THE INFINITE FRAME OF *DESTINY.*

WHAT DO YOU *MEAN?* STOP TALKING IN RIDDLES!

WE ALL SERVE A *FUNCTION...* MAKE SACRIFICES... AND HOPE, IN THE END, WE MADE A *DIFFERENCE.* AND MAKE NO MISTAKE, YOU DID PREVENT THAT PRIMITIVE WORLD FROM BEING CRUSHED BY APOCALYPSE.

PERHAPS SOMETIMES *LESSER* EVILS ARE NECESSARY IF *GREATER* EVILS ARE TO BE OVERCOME.

I TAKE MY LEAVE...

YOU'RE *SHIVERING.*

YEAH. BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH MY *HEAD* TELLS ME SHE'S RIGHT... MY *HEART* KEEPS ASKING IF IT WAS WORTH ONE MAN'S SOUL.

AND..?

AND I CAN'T HELP THINKING THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING *ELSE...* SOMETHING WE DID WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING IT.

NEW YORK HARBOR.

1860

AFTER MONTHS COWERING IN THE DARK WHILE THE ATLANTIC BROKE AND ROARED OVERHEAD...

... THEY EMERGE, WEAK-LEGGED AND LIGHT-HEADED, BLINKING ONTO THE BATTERY...

... INTO CASTLE GARDEN, INAUGURATED ONLY FIVE YEARS EARLIER TO ACCOMMODATE THE GROWING INFLUX OF IMMIGRANTS.

THEY COME FROM CORK AND DUBLIN...

... HAMBURG, LEIPZIG AND MOSCOW...

... SARDINIA, NAPLES...

... LONDON.

DON'T FORGET, IF THEY ASK, I'M YOUR DAD. YOUR MUM DIED WHEN YOU WAS A *NIPPER.*

IF THEY FIND OUT WE AIN'T *RELATED*, THEY MIGHT SHOVE YOU INTO A WORK-HOUSE.

OKAY, OSCAR.

I MEAN, *DAD*...

NAME?

Uhh...

NAMEN? EL NOMBRE?

THIS IS A *NEW BEGINNING*, DANNY. WE SHOULD HAVE A NEW NAME. A NICE CLEAN ONE.

YOU CHOOSE ONE FOR US.

HE REMEMBERS THAT BEAUTIFUL WOMAN... AND THE STRONG, KIND MAN WHO WAS HER HUSBAND.

YES, IF HE COULD GROW UP TO BE LIKE HIM, HE WOULD BE HAPPY.

OUR NAME IS...

... SUMMERS.

OSCAR AND *DANIEL* SUMMERS.

# EPILOGUE:

## 1882

WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

HE ALMOST LAUGHS OUT LOUD AS THE CORTEGE FILES OUT THROUGH THE SOFTLY FALLING RAIN...

...CARRYING THE EARTHLY REMAINS OF CHARLES DARWIN.

WHEN YOU WERE ALIVE, THEY *VILIFIED* YOU.

NOW THAT YOU ARE *DEAD*, THEY BURY YOU IN THE HIGHEST CHURCH OF THE LAND.

PERHAPS YOU UNDERESTIMATED RELIGION'S INFINITE CAPACITY FOR *IRONY*, CHARLES...

...AND ITS OWN UNPARALLELED ABILITY TO *EVOLVE* — TO ACCOMMODATE A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT.

I SAY! YOU THERE! IS IT? IT *IS!* THIS IS *HIGGINS*, FROM THE *ROYAL SOCIETY*, I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU FOR OVER TWENTY --

G-GOOD... LORD... YOUR *FACE!*

SO... *WHITE!*

SO... *B-BLOOD-LESS!*

F- FORGIVE... ME... I THOUGHT... I MEAN...

FOR ONE MOMENT... YOU LOOKED JUST LIKE A *MAN* I ONCE KNEW... A SCIENTIST... *NATHANIEL ESSEX...*

...HE WAS *BRILLIANT.* BUT... A LITTLE... YOU KNOW...

...*TOUCHED.*

YES, I HAVE *HEARD* OF THIS MAN.

I BELIEVE HE DIED SOME YEARS AGO.

GOOD DAY.

GOOD... DAY TO YOU, SIR.

YES. HE *DIED.*

SO WHY HAS HE KEPT THIS WORTHLESS TRINKET ALL THESE YEARS?

WHY HAS HE KEPT REBECCA'S MUSIC BOX?

NATHANIEL ESSEX IS **DEAD.**

YOU TOO, CHARLES.

SO IS REBECCA... ADAM... OUR UNNAMED, UNBORN CHILD.

TODAY, FINALLY, I LET GO OF YOU *ALL.*

I *REMEMBER,* CHARLES, LONG, LONG AGO. THE NIGHT THAT REBECCA DIED.

I BURST INTO YOUR HOUSE, RANTING LIKE A MADMAN.

I TOLD YOU... THAT I LEAVE THE FUTURE TO YOU.

WELL, IT SEEMS...

...IT IS *YOU...*

...WHO HAS LEFT THE FUTURE TO *ME.*

DING DONG

DING DONG

DING DONG

Peter Milligan
Writer

John Paul Leon
Pencils

Sharon Martinbrough
Inks

Kevin Somers
Colors

Malibu
Enhancement

RS&Comicraft/DL
Letters

Mark Powers
Editor

Bob Harras
Chief